



U.S. Department
of Transportation
Federal Aviation
Administration

CE071809

Aviation Safety Program

Letter to Airman

Operations at Garden City, Kansas

Letter to Airman 2003-01

Dear Fellow Pilot:

We need your help to spread the word! The Garden City Regional Airport, Garden City, Kansas is experiencing an unusual amount of Pilot Deviations. Pilot Deviations are FAA actions filed by Air Traffic Control against pilots who do not follow Air Traffic Control (ATC) clearances or fail to contact ATC when required. Failure of a pilot to obtain an ATC clearance could result in a serious runway incursion incident or accident. In this case, many pilots who have been the subject of a pilot deviation at the Garden City Regional Airport (GCK) have told FAA Inspectors they were unaware that there is an operating control tower at GCK. The GCK Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT) has been in continuous operation since December 2000 and is in operation from 1300Z to 0300Z (7:00 AM – 9:00 PM CST) everyday. All current FAA aeronautical charts and publications contain information of the GCK ATCT and its hours of operation.

Pilots operating into GCK are reminded that they are operating in Class “D” airspace and must establish communication and obtain an appropriate ATC clearance(s) from GCK ATCT before entering the Class “D” airspace and/or operating at the GCK airport.

Communication can be established with GCK ATCT on the Common Traffic Advisory Frequency (CTAF) of 118.15 MHz (GCK Tower). The CTAF frequency should be used at all times when operating in the GCK Class “D” airspace or while on or at the GCK airport, even when the tower is not in operation. Since GCK has a CTAF frequency, pilots should never use “Unicom” to announce their intentions at GCK.

The greatest percentage of pilots who have been the subject of a pilot deviation at GCK have stated that they were operating with obsolete aeronautical charts or had not checked current information about the GCK airport in the FAA Airport Facility Directory. We must remind pilots that Federal Aviation Regulation § 91.103, Preflight Action, states in part that “Each pilot in command shall, before beginning a flight become familiar with all available information concerning that flight...” This information includes but is not limited to using current aeronautical charts or publications and becoming informed of any and all NOTAMs that apply to their intended flight.

Preventing surface incidents and runway incursions has been the number one priority of the FAA’s Safety Program for the past two years. The FAA will continue to address this critical issue through the FAA Runway Safety Program and at FAA Safety Seminars.

We need your help to get the word to your fellow airman. Please notify other pilots in your area that there is an operating tower at the Garden City Regional Airport and share or post this Letter to Airmen at your local airport.

The FAA is and remains focused on airport and runway safety. We will continue to improve safety through the FAA’s Aviation Safety Program and other steps at the GCK airport to improve runway safety. If you have any questions regarding operations at the GCK Airport, please contact Bruce Allred, Safety Program Manager at the Wichita FSDO at (316) 941-1208 or Mike Scheiman, GCK ATCT Manager at (620) 276-8994.

Felix L. Lococo
Manager, ICT FSDO